

INDIAN RESERVATIONS IN NORTHERN MONTANA.

MAY 10, 1886.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

Mr. NELSON, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 8741.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 2886) to provide permanent reservations for the Indians in Northern Montana, and for other purposes, have had the same under consideration, and respectfully submit the following report:

Provision having been made in the general Indian appropriation bill just passed for negotiating an agreement with said Indians respecting the matters covered by said bill, your committee deem it unwise and premature to take the action contemplated in said bill at this time; but inasmuch as the trade and commerce of the people of Montana and the adjacent country demand suitable railroad facilities through the Indian country, and as no railroads can be built until proper provision is made for granting right of way, your committee report the accompanying substitute, and recommend its passage, and that the said bill (H. R. 2886) do lie upon the table.

The substitute merely provides how railroad companies may secure right of way through the Indian reservation in Northern Montana. The fee-title in this so-called reservation is in the United States. The Indians are simply tenants at will (18 Statutes, page 28).

Sections 1 and 2 of the proposed substitute are identical with sections 1 and 2 of the act of March 3, 1875 (18 Statutes, page 482), granting right of way to railroads over the public lands of the United States. Section 3 of the proposed substitute makes provision for due compensation to the Indians for their possessory right, and otherwise guards and protects the interests of the Indians and the Government.